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**THE MCGRAWVILLE SENTINEL**  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1885.

**It I Were You.**

Why did he look so grave? she asked.  
"What might the trouble be?"  
"My little maid," he sighing said,  
"I suppose that you were me,  
And you a weighty secret owned,  
Pray tell me what you'd do?"  
"I think I'd tell it somebody,"  
Said she, "if I were you!"  
But still he sighed and looked askance,  
Despite her sympathy.  
"Oh, tell me little maid," he said  
Again, "if you were me,  
And if you loved a pretty lass,  
Oh, then, what would you do?"  
"I think I'd go and tell her so,"  
Said she, "if I were you!"  
"My little maid," "if you," he said,  
"Alone are dear to me,"  
Ah, then, she turned away her head,  
And ne'er a word said she,  
But what he whispered in her ear,  
And what she answered too—  
Oh, no, I cannot tell you this;  
I'd guess, if I were you!

**My Strange Patient.**

Some friends of mine who had been spending the summer at one of the most fashionable watering-places in the United States, had come back with a strange story about an invalid whom they recommended to me as an interesting patient.

As I listened to their description, which my faith in their veracity compelled me to believe, I said to myself that the case was one of those exceptionally strange ones that defy the wisdom of the physician, and whose hidden causes are never revealed, so far as the eyes of this world are concerned.

Nevertheless I made up my mind that when circumstances were favorable, I would run down and take a look at Lacy Lot—that was the invalid's name. It was the middle of a severe winter before I was able to do so; the circumstances that gave me the opportunity arising from the fact that one of my most intimate friends—a literary man, who loved seclusion at his labors—was spending the winter at his own cottage, at the watering-place in question, and being suddenly taken ill, had telegraphed for me. I calculated to go one day and return the next. I found my friend suffering from a heavy cold, while the morbidness induced by his lonely way of life had magnified out of all proportion to what it was in reality. Having done the best I could for him, I resisted his invitations to stay, and succeeded with great difficulty in hiring a horse and buggy, with a boy to drive them, from one of the adjacent hotels. With these accommodations, I set forth to visit my strange patient at Thorncliff.

Thorncliff was a bleak peak, or jutting rock, surmounted by a tumble-down tavern, some ten miles from any other human habitation. The tavern was called Thorncliff tavern, and had been built many years ago in the hope that it would become a favorite resort for excursion parties. That hope had fallen through.

The proprietor, who had almost ruined himself by his enterprise, had now been dead for several years, and, as I subsequently learned, had left his widow and daughter—an only child—a sum of money just sufficient for their support. That mother and child were the only occupants of the ruined homestead, and the child Lucy Lot, was the strange patient, in whom some watering-place gossip had interested me.

The overpowering gloom of that day I never shall forget. The iron sky, the roar of a sea that was freezing against its will, the ice-crust layer of snow that was crunched beneath my carriage-wheels, the desolation of the prospect, the fact that no house nor human being was in sight, the noise of the winds as they made havoc over the boundless expanse of shore and sea, the grinding of the ice-toothed surf into the resisting sands, the deadly cold of the atmosphere, the desolation of soul one experiences when he finds himself among surroundings so bare, and pitiless, and bleak—all the sensations due to such scenes and circumstances as these swept over me, so that I was glad when the horse and buggy stopped before the door of Thorncliff tavern, and I caught a glimpse through the window or a bright fire within.

I got out of the buggy, but my young friend declined to follow me into the house. He had evidently heard queer stories about Thorncliff and its inmates, and no persuasion of mine could induce him to change his bleak situation for a place by single-nook within.

I am persuaded he would rather have perished in the cold than have found life by that haunted fireside. So, promising him not to remain longer than half an hour—for it was already three o'clock in the afternoon, and the road back was none of the safest—I entered Thorncliff tavern alone.

The brightly-burning fire, which seemed alive, was the only inhabitant of the quaint, old-fashioned room in which I found myself. Two windows, made of those small panes of glass our forefathers found as serviceable as the plate of more modern days, looked out upon the sea. Situated as the house was, on the verge of a projecting bluff, the eye surveyed, through these windows, the arc of an immense circle, made up of sea, and sky, and sandy shore.

Riveted to the spot in a dismal trance, in which an oppression at my chest was the prevailing sensation, I must have stood still for some ten minutes, not realizing the warmth and brightness of the grate just before me, and feeling myself an atom

cast up, like a wreck, by the elements that warred without. From this trance I was aroused by a light touch laid upon my arm, and a soft, clear voice, which said:

"There will be dark work over there."  
I turned and looked, and started at the apparition that stood beside me.

It was that of a young girl of not more than eighteen. Her face was very white; her lips were full and crimson; her eyes, large, liquid, and blue; her undressed hair fell round her shoulders. She was attired in a gown of some coarse material, with open hanging sleeves. One hand she had laid lightly on my shoulder. The other was pointing over the sea. By the hand resting upon me she had raised herself slightly, so as to bring her lips near my ear. The voice in which she spoke was not a whisper, nor a muttering. It was a soft, clear, low sound. As I turned and looked at her, she pointed again, as though indicating a point of infinite distance, and repeated:

"There will be dark work over there—dark work! dark work!"  
She withdrew her eyes from the direction in which her extended hand had pointed, and rested them upon my face, as though to question it for an answer to her language. As I looked in them, I saw the gaze of extreme distance, caused by their having followed the direction of her hand, slowly dying out, and a recognition of near things beginning to take its place.

At this moment, another sight no less curious attracted my attention. The figure of an old and stooping woman suddenly made itself visible at the farther end of the oblong room. As she walked slowly forward toward where I was standing, she seemed unconscious that I was there. Her countenance—the color of old parchment—was furrowed with a million wrinkles. She wore a high cap, and short dress, with a muslin kerchief pinned around her bosom. Her hands were busy with some knitting, and on that her eyes were bent. As she advanced, she uttered a low crooning noise, as though her cracked voice was striving to realize some tune of her childhood to itself.

As she reached the fireplace, my shadow caught her eyes, and she looked up. The most surprising thing to me was the old woman's absence of surprise. She never paused in her knitting, but, looking me calmly in the face, exclaimed— "if so faint a ghost of a voice can be termed an exclamation:

"So you have come at last, sir—come at last!"  
"It seems, then, I was expected?" I answered, scarce knowing what answer to make.

"Expected! Oh yes! you were expected," answered the old woman, riveting her eyes once more on her work. "Blondelle"—indicating with a gesture of her needles the girl beside me—"always knows who's a-comin', and what's a-goin' to take place, when she's this way."

"What way?" I asked, bending an involuntarily protective look on Blondelle, who stood gazing at me with the same sad earnestness.

"Ah! that's where it is, sir," replied the old woman, shaking her head. "I know how it all is, but it's hard to explain it to strangers. Blondelle's been sick with a strange sickness for the past five years, and sometimes I think she'll be the death of me. As you see her now, sir, she's asleep. You might pinch her black and blue all over and she'd never feel it. When she's awake, and in her proper senses, she could no more stand up or walk across the room than you or I could walk across the sea out yonder. When she is fast asleep, as you see her now, sir, her strength comes back to her, and she can see things that I can't see. Seems to me her eyes can go into the land of the dead. Long before you came—days and days ago—she said she was going to have a visit from a stranger just like you. And, somehow or other, she seems to connect this storm we're having with something in her past life."

At this moment I heard Blondelle's voice once more. The words that broke from her lips were:

"Yes, Darkness and storm, and danger, and death! Death for me, death for him, death for her"— (pointing to her mother)—"death for all but you!" bringing back her eyes to rest on me.

So saying, she turned her back upon us, and walked slowly and with drooping head to the door. "Don't put yourself in any trouble, sir," said the mother, as I made a motion to help Blondelle with my arm. "She feels this state going off, and her time for waking coming on. She will just have time to reach her bed. She never fails, sir. But she'll be the death of me, I know. As the old woman completed her sentence, the soft crash, as of a body falling upon a bed, came to us from the next room.

The mother motioned me away. "Come to see her to-morrow," she said, "if you will be so kind. I will prepare Blondelle by telling her you have been here. It would be too much of a shock for her to see you now."

"But you say her predictions always come true?" I asked.

"Yes."  
"Have you no fear for yourself, then? No fear of something imminent and near, if what she says, storm, and danger, and death—be true?"  
The old woman's eyes flashed with a strange light as she lifted them, for the last time, to mine.

child's strange disease. She has been so ever since her father's death—ever since I forbid her marriage with a young sea-captain who loved her. If my punishment is to come, it will come, sir; be the form what it may," and with these words, she bent her face resolutely over her knitting, and looked at me no more.

When I got into the buggy, I found the boy blue with cold. We reached the hotel in safety, however; but the next morning, so great was my impatience to be at Thorncliff again, that I set out alone.

The weather had undergone one of those many-mooded changes which are peculiar to the climate of America. The atmosphere was as soft as May, and I might have imagined that the melting snow would uncover flowers.

When within a mile of Thorncliff tavern, I suddenly became a witness to a phenomenon, such as I fervently hope it may never be my lot to behold again.

At a little distance above the sea I observed two masses of clouds rapidly approaching one and another. They were on a level. One mass was dark and heavy; the other was luminous. Both moved with equal rapidity. Before I could make clear to my mind what phenomenon was about to occur, they met, and with a discharge like that of infinite artillery, swooped to the ground in a dense lurid column, in the shape of an inverted balloon. Without pausing for a moment, this column rolled inward from the sea toward the shore, reaching which, it entered upon an oblique course. I saw rocks, trees, bushes, stones, and trees tossed into the air. As the cyclone swept around, a perfect rarl of such missiles threatened to hurl destruction upon my path. It was almost impossible to hold in check the terrified horse. I had stepped out of the buggy and was talking to the animal soothingly, when all at once a terrible crashing sound, louder than all the rest, reached my ear, and through the disordered atmosphere, filled with the particles, smoking, like water in the steam, from the ruins in the wake of the cyclone, I saw the rooftop of Thorncliff tavern lifted high into the air, with posts, timbers, and planks flying in all directions, and I heard a low, long shriek of anguish such as will never die out of my ears.

Yes, Blondelle's dim prophecy had proved true, and the hint her mother had given me of her unhappy attachment, helped me to piece her history together for myself.

The whirlwind swept on in its course and died away in the distance, and I went down to the shore with a dread of what I should find there.

The ruins of Thorncliff tavern were heaped upon the beach. Apart, apparently uninjured, but perfectly dead, lay the body of the old woman, her face peaceful, as though undisturbed by any premonition of the sudden death she was to die. Her clinched hands held her knitting-needles.

But another wreck was added to that of the homestead.

At the very edge of the surf lay the ruins of a boat; the bruised and bleeding but lifeless body of a young man beside them. At that moment I had no time to be surprised at the sight of a woman kneeling by him. In the agonized countenance I recognized Blondelle's. As I neared her, she looked up into my face and smiled, and I perceived a frightful wound upon her breast.

"It is he," she whispered, pointing to the dead sailor. "We shall be happy, now. He has come back to me at last."

And so saying, she lay down beside the eternal sleeper, the lost love of her youth, and sank into the eternal sleep herself.

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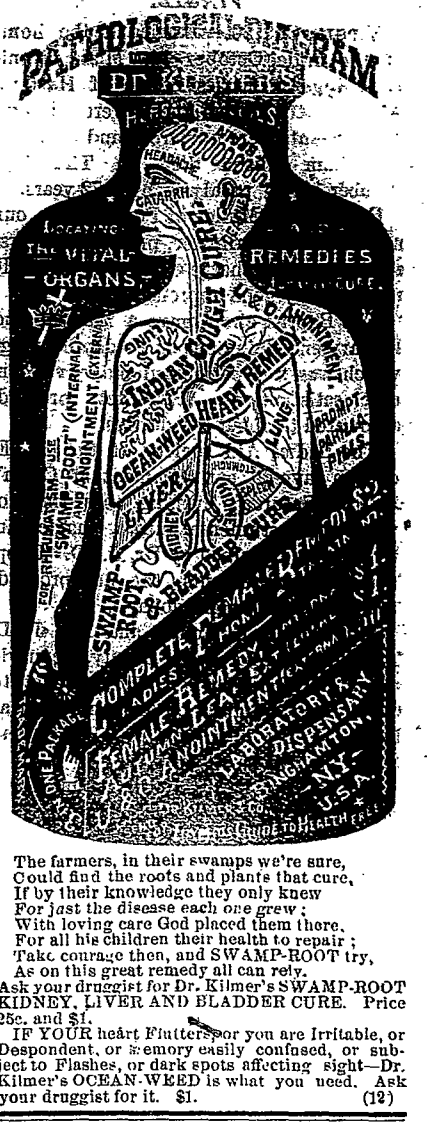
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